

REMARKS

The Office Action of June 12, 2007, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, claims 9 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; claims 15-17 [and 21] were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Daikuzono* (U.S. Patent No. 5,623,940). Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 1-8, 10-14 and 22, and the indication that claims 19-21 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record. Applicants note the inclusion of claim 21 as both a rejected and an allowable claim and, although moot in view of the above amendments, clarification for the record is kindly requested in the next official action.

As set forth above, claims 9 and 18 have been amended to overcome the rejection under Section 112 due to lack of proper antecedent basis. Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection has thus been obviated.

Applicants note the allowability of claim 19 and, in order to expedite prosecution of the application, claim 15 has been amended to include the limitations thereof. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully contend that independent claim 15 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 16-18 and 20-21 depend from claim 15 and are thus also in condition for allowance based at least upon their dependence therefrom.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.


Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicant regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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